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The
Fourth Massachusetts
Cavalry

Closing Scenes of the War
for the Maintenance
of the Union



From Richmond
to Appomattox

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Col. Arnold A. Rand
4th Massachusetts Volunteer Cavalry

The Battle at High Bridge

by

Major Edward T. Bouve, U. S. A.

The life of the American Cavalry is almost coeval with that of the American people. Laws were passed for the formation of a mounted force in 1648, when the colony of Massachusetts Bay had not yet attained its majority. Twenty-seven years later, in 1675, when the war with Metacomet (King Philip) broke out there were five troops of cavalry, which in point of equipment, discipline and appearance, had received the commendation of European officers who had seen them.

Captain Prentice's troop formed a part of Major-General Winslow's army, which fought at Narragansett Fort. It participated in the terrible march and the awful battle which ensued. Of that battle, the latest and most exhaustive of its historians says:

"This must be classed as one of the most glorious victories ever achieved in our history, and considering conditions, as displaying heroism both in stubborn patience and dashing intrepidity never excelled in American warfare."

So much for the first great battle in which Massachusetts cavalry took an honorable part. I may be pardoned for referring to it in this paper, on account of the singular coincidence, that in one of the last, and unquestionably one of the most brilliant actions ever fought in America—the Battle at High Bridge—Massachusetts horsemen accomplished a very difficult thing: they succeeded in adding a yet deeper lustre to the laurels which have ever adorned the standards of the American Cavalry.

The story of the fight near High Bridge, Virginia, is but an account of an obscure skirmish, if the numbers engaged and its duration be solely considered; judged, however, by the fierce intensity of the struggle, and the carnage, together with the results, which alone, yet amply, justified the apparent madness of the attack, it is seen to be one of the most notable of the achievements of these heroic days; for it led to the culmination of the campaign and

end of the war, at Appomattox. It was called by Mr. Hay and Mr. Nicolay, in their history of Abraham Lincoln, the most gallant and pathetic battle of the war.

The Fourth Regiment of Massachusetts Cavalry had been subjected to a training and discipline which caused it to develop rapidly into one of the finest cavalry regiments in the army. The officers were nearly all veteran soldiers, educated in the hard school of war. A large proportion of the men in the ranks had seen service, and the rank and file, as a whole, proved to be such as any officer might be proud to lead.

The quality of the regiment is easily accounted for, when it is considered that its first colonel left the lasting impress of himself upon it; that colonel was Arnold A. Rand.

From the very beginning of its service in the field, the regiment had the hard fortune to be cut up into detachments and details for special duty. This was probably due to the good opinion entertained of it by the general; but it was very trying and disappointing to the colonel, and to all who had hoped to be serving, as earlier orders—too soon countermanded—directed, with Sheridan.

At the opening of the last campaign, the first and third battalions were in Virginia. Three squadrons, with the field and staff, were attached to the headquarters of General Ord, commanding the Army of the James; two were at the headquarters of the Twenty-fourth, and two at those of the Twenty-fifth Army corps. One was at Fort Magruder, where it had been for many months, doing outpost and picket duty and engaged in scouting and raiding. The second battalion was in active service in South Carolina and Florida.

Before the spring campaign opened, the command of the regiment had passed to Francis Washburn of Lancaster, a member of a family distinguished for its public services. This young gentleman was a patrician in the best sense of the word. With the most brilliant prospects in life, he, like his brother, left all to serve the Republic, and both drew "the gret prize o' death in battle."

In physical proportions, in personal beauty, in superb daring, in high-minded devotion to every duty, he was the ideal of a cavalry leader, and a worthy successor to the first regimental commander.

One of the worst features of the internal economy of our armies during the civil war, was the detailing of officers and men individually from fighting regiments; the officers to serve on staff,

the men for orderlies, wagoners, hospital service and other special duties which reduced the fighting strength to a minimum compared with what it should have been. Probably the same custom would rule now.

Owing to this pernicious, although at the time unavoidable system, as well as to the ordinary casualties of the service, the three squadrons of the Fourth Cavalry under the immediate command of Colonel Washburn at the beginning of active service, had been reduced to one hundred and fifty men.

Orders were issued on the 27th of March to break camp, preparatory to the resumption of movements against the lines of communication between the besieged cities and their sources of supply.

Richmond and Petersburg were evacuated on the third of April, General Lee moving swiftly toward Amelia. The Federal armies marched at once in hot pursuit, the Army of the James taking the general direction of the Lynchburg railroad, reaching Burkesville on the evening of April 5th. That same evening, Lee left Amelia Court house, pushing rapidly in the direction of High Bridge, a long trestle over the Appomattox near Farmville. Could he reach this bridge, cross and destroy it, he might hope to succeed in gaining the mountains beyond Lynchburg.

The Army of the James instantly changed direction in pursuit. Lee's objective point became evident, and General Ord determined to destroy the bridge, if it were possible to accomplish this, before Lee could reach it. To this end, he detached Colonel Washburn, with the three squadrons of his own cavalry, now reduced by further details to thirteen officers and sixty-seven troopers, together with two small regiments of infantry, and directed him to push on rapidly and burn the bridge.

Information had been received through scouts that the structure was not defended by any fortifications whatever. Reports also came in that the Confederates were badly demoralized. In consequence of these stories, which would appear to have been accepted as fully reliable at headquarters, Washburn was ordered to attack any force which he might meet, as it would certainly fall away before him.

It was a perilous order to give Washburn, for his valor was ever the better part of his discretion.

Some of our generals seem to have been strangely misled as to the spirit of the Confederates remaining in arms. Never had they

fought more fiercely than in those last days of the struggle. Their skeleton battalions threw themselves upon our heavy lines at Sailor's Creek as desperately as they charged under Pickett and Edward Johnson at Gettysburg, and their artillery was never more superbly served than when they were attacked in flank by Gregg's brigade on the seventh of April, when that general was made prisoner and his brigade driven in complete discomfiture by the famous Washington Artillery of New Orleans.

On the morning of the sixth, before dawn, Washburn's little detachment took up its route, the infantry, especially, being in poor condition for the severe and peculiarly dangerous service to which they were called, for they were exhausted by the forced marches which had been indispensable during the preceding three days. The distance was sixteen miles to Farmville. After having been two hours or so upon the road, Washburn satisfied himself that the rebel army, moving diagonally toward the Appomattox, had closed in upon his rear, cutting him off from the Army of the James. There were also unmistakable indications that Confederate columns were moving in front of his command, as well as on its flank. The detachment was thus marching practically among divisions of the enemy, who were evidently ignorant of its proximity.

Meanwhile, General Ord had learned of the movements of the Confederates, and at once despatched Brevet Brigadier General Theodore Read, adjutant general of the Army of the James, to overtake Washburn and cause him to fall back to the main army. Read, with one orderly, contrived to elude the various bodies of the enemy and finally joined Washburn, just before his command reached the vicinity of the bridge.

Upon reconnoitering the country about the bridge, it was found that the information as to its not being fortified was entirely false. A strong redoubt mounting four guns protected it, and the ground around it was open, with morasses in front rendering it almost impossible of access. Washburn considered, however, that a sudden attack on its rear side by cavalry, might be successful.

In pursuance of this plan, he left Read with the infantry in a narrow belt of woodland near the Burkesville road, and moved away to make a detour in order to come upon the rear of the fortification.

The column soon reached a small stream spanned by a bridge, the planks of which had been torn up. Lieutenant Davis with the



Col. Francis Washburn

advanced guard, dashed across the stream and laid the planks under sharp fire from a force of dismounted cavalry which occupied low earthworks on the further side. Washburn soon came up with the main body, and throwing out a line of skirmishers, attacked so vigorously that after a fight of half an hour's duration, the enemy retreated toward Farmville. Here they were reinforced, and Washburn soon found their numbers so great and their artillery fire so heavy, that they could not be driven. Moreover there was incessant musketry firing from the place where he had left the infantry, indicating an attack upon them, and he thought best to withdraw and go to their support.

A sharp ride of a few moments brought the cavalry to the scene of action. Had the Burkesville road been followed for a short distance farther the column would have rounded a bend in the road, and come upon a strong body of Confederate cavalry which was moving in the direction of the firing; but at a point in rear of where the fighting was going on, Washburn left the road and led his men through the woods and along the bed of a ravine, then up a hill, where he halted to learn the state of affairs.

The little line of infantry, outflanked and outnumbered, was falling back fighting, pushed by a brigade of dismounted cavalry, while regiments of horse were galloping up on the flanks and forming for a charge. The infantry were clearly exhausted and their ammunition was used up, but Washburn, after a short consultation with Read, sent his adjutant to rally them, and determined by a furious attack upon the dismounted troops of the enemy, to throw them back on their cavalry and thus, supported by the infantry, to wrest victory from the enemy. He then led the column along the crest of the slope, and forming line, turned to his men and explained his purpose, well knowing what he could expect from the splendid fellows.

Then Washburn ordered "Forward!" The line trotted down the slope. In a moment came his clear call "Gallop, march! Charge!" And to the music from the brazen throats of their own trumpets chiming with their fierce battle shout, those seventy-eight Massachusetts horsemen hurled themselves upon the heavy masses of the foe.

For a few moments the air was bright with the flashing of sabres, and shattered by the explosion of carbine and pistol, while screams of rage mingled with the cries of the wounded and all the

hideous sounds of a savage hand-to-hand fight. As all this died away, it was seen that the immediate body of troops which the Fourth Cavalry had struck was practically annihilated. Their dead and wounded were scattered thickly over the field, while the crowd of prisoners taken was embarrassing to the captors. Driving these before them back toward the hill, to which they must retire to reform for attack upon the enemy's horse (for Washburn's mere handful of men forbade his leaving any to form the reserve without which cavalry almost never can charge without great risk) they were astounded at the sight which presented itself on the Burkesville road. As far as the eye could reach, it was filled with Confederate cavalry, and lines of battle were forming as rapidly as possible and advancing swiftly to the aid of their defeated van.

All hope of victory or of escape from such a field was now utterly gone, but the colonel and his men were mad with the fury of battle, and wild with exultation over the bloody triumph already achieved. But one thought possessed them. The little battalion swept down the slope once more, pressing close behind their knightly leader and their blue standard. They crashed through three lines of their advancing enemies, tearing their formation asunder as the tornado cuts its way through the forest. But now, order and coherence were lost, and the troopers mingled with the Confederates in a bitter hand-to-hand struggle. A few scattered fighters were rallied from out this fearful *melée* by the gallant Captain Hodges, than whom a more chivalrous soldier never drew sabre. He led them in a last furious charge, in which he fell, as he would have wished, "amid the battle's wildest tide."

By this time, all was lost. Eight of the officers lay dead or wounded upon the field. Three were prisoners, their horses having been killed under them. The surgeon and chaplain, being non-combatants, were captured while in attendance upon the wounded.

The battle at High Bridge was finished, for General Read had been mortally wounded at the first fire after the infantry had rallied in support of the cavalry attack, and the two small regiments were overwhelmed and compelled to surrender as soon as the cavalry had ceased to be a factor.

Colonel Washburn had been shot in the mouth and sabred as he fell from his horse. He was found on the field with the other dead and wounded the next day, when the advance of the Army of the James came up. He was taken to the hospital at Point of Rocks

but insisted upon being sent to his home in Massachusetts, where he died in the arms of his mother. Before his death, he was, at Grant's request, brevetted as Brigadier General.

Of the other officers, Lieutenant Colonel Jenkins was severely wounded, as were Captain Caldwell and Lieutenants Belcher and Thompson. Captains Hodges and Goddard were killed, and Lieutenant Davis shot after having been made a prisoner, for resenting an insult offered him by a rebel officer. The adjutant, Lieutenant Lathrop, after his horse had been killed under him, was taken into the woods to be shot, because his captor asserted that he had slain his brother in the fight. Fortunately a Confederate staff-officer observed the proceeding, and rescued him from his would-be murderer.

Happily, the casualties among the enlisted men were much less in proportion than among the officers. They had to a man fought with the most desperate valor, keeping up the struggle after all the officers were down, until absolutely engulfed in the masses of the enemy.

In telling of the practical annihilation of a body of troops, the statement that their standard was saved from capture seems almost incredible; yet such was the case in this instance. The color sergeant, a gallant soldier from Hingham by the name of Thomas Hickey, had carried the standard through the hottest of the battle. At the last moment, seeing that it was impossible to save it from capture except by destroying it, he managed to elude the enemies who were closing in upon him, and putting spurs to his horse, flew toward a hut which he had observed in the woods, and threw himself from his charger just as he reached it, with his foes close upon him. Rushing in, he thrust his precious battle flag into a fire which was blazing on the hearth. The painted silk flashed up in flame, and by the time that his pursuers broke in, it was ashes!

His life was spared in consideration of his devoted bravery, and he subsequently received a commission from the Governor of the Commonwealth, in recognition of his heroic deed.

The losses of the Confederates in this action were at least a half greater in number than Washburn's whole force. By their own report, there were a hundred killed and wounded, among them a general, one colonel, three majors and a number of officers of lower grade.

The Battle at High Bridge was at first thought to have been a useless sacrifice. It was a sacrifice indeed, but it unquestionably hastened the termination of the war, by days, and perhaps weeks.

After the surrender, Lee's Inspector General said to Ord,

"To the sharpness of that fight, the cutting off of Lee's army at Appomattox was probably owing. So fierce were the charges of Colonel Washburn and his men, and so determined their fighting, that General Lee received the impression that they must be supported by a large part of the army, and that his retreat was cut off."

Lee consequently halted and began to intrench; and this delay gave time for Ord to come up, and enabled Sheridan to intercept the enemy at Sailor's Creek.

The Confederate General Rosser said to a member of the regiment whom he met after the war:

"You belonged to the Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry? Give me your hand! I have been many a day in hot fights. I never saw anything approaching that at High Bridge. While your colonel kept his saddle, everything went down before him!"

The Confederate troops at High Bridge were Rosser's and a part of Fitz Hugh Lee's divisions.

"Was your colonel drunk or crazy this morning, that he attacked with less than one hundred men the best fighting division of the Confederate cavalry?" asked a rebel officer of a wounded captain of the Fourth; "We have seen hard fighting, but we never heard of anything like this before!"

The Confederate officers had at first utterly refused to credit the stories of their prisoners, insisting that the small force would never have fought so fiercely unless it had been the advance of a strong column.

Grant says in his memoirs.

"The Confederates took this to be only the advance of a larger column which had headed them off, and so stopped to intrench; so that this gallant band had checked the progress of a strong detachment of the Confederate army. This stoppage of Lee's column no doubt saved to us the trains following."



Major Atherton H. Stevens
4th Mass. Volunteer Cavalry

The First United States Flag Raised In Richmond After the War.

By Mrs. Lasalle Corbell Pickett,

Wife of Major-General George E. Pickett, C. S. A.

THE first knell of the evacuation of Richmond sounded on Sunday morning while we were on our knees in St. Paul's Church, invoking God's protecting care for our absent loved ones, and blessings on our cause.

The intense excitement, the tolling of the bells, the hasty parting, the knowledge that all communication would be cut off between us and our loved ones, and the dread, undefined fear in our helplessness and desertion, make a nightmare memory.

General Ewell had orders for the destruction of the public buildings, which orders our Secretary of War, Gen. J. C. Breckenridge, strove earnestly but without avail to have countermanded. The order, alas! was obeyed beyond the "letter of the law."

The terrible conflagration was kindled by the Confederate authorities, who applied the torch to the Shockoe warehouse, it, too, being classed among the public buildings because of the tobacco belonging to France and England stored in it. A fresh breeze was blowing from the south; the fire swept on in its haste and fury over a great area in an almost incredibly short time, and by noon the flames had transformed into a desert waste all the city bounded by Seventh and Fifteenth Streets, and Main Street and the river. One thousand houses were destroyed. The streets were filled with furniture and every description of wares, dashed down to be trampled in the mud or buried where they lay.

At night a saturnalia began. About dark, the Government commissary began the destruction of its stores. Soldiers and citizens gathered in front, catching the liquor in basins and pitchers; some with their hats and some with their boots. It took but a short time for this to make a manifestation as dread as the flames. The crowd became a howling mob, so frenzied that the officers of the law had to flee for their lives, reviving memories of 1781, when the British under Arnold rode down Richmond Hill, and, invading the city, broke open the stores and emptied the provisions and liquors into the gutters, making even the uninitiated cows and hogs drunk for days.

All through the night, crowds of men, women, and children traversed the streets, loading themselves with supplies and plunder. At midnight, soldiers drunk with vile liquor, followed by a reckless crowd as drunk as themselves, dashed in the plate-glass windows of the stores, and made a wreck of everything.

About nine o'clock on Monday morning, terrific shell explosions, rapid and continuous, added to the terror of the scene, and gave the impression that the city was being shelled by the retreating Confederate army from the south side. But the explosions were soon found to proceed from the Government arsenal and laboratory, then in flames. Later in the morning, a merciful Providence caused a lull in the breeze. The terrific explosion of the laboratory and of the arsenal caused every window in our home to break. The old plate-glass mirrors, built in the walls, were cracked and shattered.

Fort Darling was blown up, and later on the rams. It was eight o'clock when the Federal troops entered the city. It required the greatest effort to tame down the riotous, crazed mob, and induce them to take part in the struggle to save their own. The firemen, afraid of the soldiers who had obeyed the orders to light the torch, would not listen to any appeals or entreaties, and so the flames were under full headway, fanned by a southern breeze, when the Union soldiers came to the rescue.

The flouring mills caught fire from the tobacco houses, communicating it to Cary and Main streets. Every bank was

destroyed. The War Department was a mass of ruins; the *Enquirer* and *Dispatch* offices were in ashes; and the county court-house, the American Hotel, and most of the finest stores of the city were ruined.

Libby Prison and the Presbyterian church escaped. Such a reign of terror and pillage, fire and flame, fear and despair! The yelling and howling and swearing and weeping and wailing beggar description. Families houseless and homeless under the open sky!

I shall never forget General Weitzel's command, composed exclusively of colored troops, as I saw them through the dense black columns of smoke. General Weitzel had for some time been stationed on the north side of the James River, but a few miles from Richmond, and he had only to march in and take possession. He despatched Major A. H. Stevens of the Fourth Massachusetts cavalry, and Major E. E. Graves of his staff, with about a hundred mounted men, to reconnoitre the roads and works leading to Richmond. They had gone but a little distance into the Confederate lines, when they saw a shabby, old-fashioned carriage, drawn by a pair of lean, lank horses, the occupants waving a white flag. They met this flag-of-truce party at the line of fortifications, just beyond the junction of the Osborne turnpike and New Market road. The carriage contained the mayor of Richmond—Colonel Mayo—Judge Meredith of the Supreme Court, and Judge Lyons. The fourth worthy I cannot recall. Judge Lyons, our former minister to England, and one of the representative men of Virginia, made the introductions in his own characteristic way, and then Colonel Mayo, who was in command of the flag-of-truce party, handed to Major Stevens a small slip of wall paper, on which was written the following: "It is proper to formally surrender to the Federal authorities the city of Richmond, hitherto capital of the Confederate States of America, and the defenses protecting it up to this time." That was all. The document was approved of, and Major Stevens most courteously accepted the terms for his commanding general, to whom it was at once transmitted, and moved his column upon the evacuated city, taking possession and saving it from ashes.

His first order was to sound the alarm bells and to take command at once of the fire department, which consisted of fourteen substitute men, those who were exempt from service because of disease, two steam fire engines, four worthless hand engines, and a large amount of hose, destroyed by the retreating half-crazed Confederates. His next order was to raise the stars and stripes over the Capitol. Quick as thought, two soldiers, one from Company E and one from Company H of the Fourth Massachusetts cavalry, crept to the summit and planted the flag of the nation. Two bright, tasteful guidons were hoisted by the halyards in place of the red cross. The living colors of the Union were greeted, while our "Warriors' banner took its flight to meet the warrior's soul."

That flag, whose design has been accredited alike to both George Washington and John Adams, was raised over Virginia by Massachusetts, in place of the one whose kinship and likeness had not, even after renewed effort, been entirely destroyed. For by the adoption of the stars and bars (three horizontal bars of equal width—the middle one white, the others red—with a blue union of nine stars in a circle) by the Confederate Congress in March, 1861, the Confederate flag was made so akin and so similar to that of the nation, as to cause confusion; so in 1863 the stars and bars was supplanted by a flag with a white field, having the battle flag (a red field charged with a blue saltier, on which were thirteen stars) for a union. This, having been mistaken for a flag of truce, was altered by covering the outer half of the field beyond the union with a vertical red bar. This was the last flag of the Confederacy.

Richmond will testify that the soldiers of Massachusetts were worthy of the honor of raising the first United States flag over her Capitol—the Capitol of the Confederacy—and also to the unvarying courtesy of Major Stevens, and the fidelity with which he kept his trust.



Cap. A. F. Ray

The Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry

In the Closing Scenes of the War for the
Maintenance of the Union,
From Richmond to Appomattox.

BY

WM. B. ARNOLD,

Formerly Company H 4th Massachusetts Cavalry.

During the winter and spring of 1864 and 1865 squadrons E and H of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry were encamped near the headquarters of General Weitzel commanding the Twenty-fifth Army Corps, then a part of the Army of the James. Our command was detached from our regiment and doing duty as orderlies and couriers at Division and Brigade headquarters and Artillery Brigade headquarters, as well as performing Provost duty at corps headquarters.

Our command numbered about eighty men in charge of Captain A. F. Ray of Company H, 4th Massachusetts cavalry. He was an officer of unusual ability. The Army of the James held possession north of the James, their lines extending from Deep Bottom, a few miles below Dutch Gap to Fort Harrison and around to the New Market road.

Our position was made very strong and withstood the attack of the Confederates several times after it was taken from them in Sept. 1864. Their defenses in our front were equally strong. In addition they had several iron clads in the James River to assist in the defense of Richmond. Our gunboats were down the river, none of them, up to this time, having ventured above the Dutch Gap canal.

The afternoon and evening of April second, 1865 indicated that something unusual was likely to occur. The Artillery firing in the direction of Petersburg in the evening, and during the night of the second was heavy and continuous, and in the night the sky was lighted up toward Richmond which proved to be the Ram Virginia on fire. When the fire reached the magazine there was a tremendous explosion. Soon after this it was reported that the Confed-

erates were evacuating the works in our front. An order came from General Weitzel for a detail of fifty cavalry which was immediately mounted, and reported at corps headquarters.

We were commanded by Captain A. F. Ray of H squadron, accompanied by officers from Twenty-fifth army corps headquarters, and the entire command in charge of Major Atherton H. Stevens of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry and Provost Marshall of the 25th Army Corps.

We proceeded at once through our fortified line and approaching the Confederate line found that the troops were gone. Working our way several miles toward Richmond, we could see through the fog a body of Confederate infantry. Major Stevens immediately ordered a charge, and Captain Ray quickly responded with his men. At our near approach they surrendered. We continued "on to Richmond," and were soon inside the inner works that were impregnable when manned by a sufficient number for defence. With deep ditches and fallen trees to entangle attacking parties, the Artillery and Infantry commanded the approach in every direction without exposing themselves.

The elaborate preparations for defense kept our armies at bay for months around Petersburg, and Richmond was prepared for standing off superior numbers by the best earthworks that our West Point engineers who were in the Confederate army could devise. As we entered these works we saw a man approaching with a flag of truce.

In the distance were mounted men and carriages. We halted and Major Stevens and his officers went forward and conferred with the party, who proved to be the Mayor of Richmond accompanied by Judge Medereth and other prominent people of Richmond. The city was formally surrendered to Major Stevens and we then went forward at a rapid pace, and coming round a turn in the roadway at the Rockets, came in full view of Richmond.

We halted for a moment to contemplate the scene. A portion of the city toward the James river was on fire. The black smoke was rolling up in great volumes. Major Stevens said "everyone of us should feel as proud as if we were promoted to be Brigadier Generals." We gave three cheers and went on, and were soon in the streets of Richmond passing Libby Prison; and we clattered up the paved street on the gallop to the Capitol, and were soon in the space in front of the Capitol building.

Major Stevens, with some of the officers, rushed into the building, and soon the guidons of Company E and H were fluttering from the top of the building. We were formed around the equestrian statue of Washington, and we gave three times three, and a Tiger, that indicated to spectators that we were there. Richmond was ours, after four long years of tremendous struggle and sacrifice. I, for one, thought of the splendid services of thousands of the best troops ever rallied to maintain a just cause. That our detail was privileged to land first in Richmond with the flags of Massachusetts, was certainly appreciated by us.

But our work was not over. A large area of the city toward the river was on fire. To add to the fury of the flames the Arsenals were blowing up and the shells were continually exploding. Corporal Macy and myself went with Captain Ray to ascertain if the bridges connecting Richmond with Manchester were destroyed by the evacuating Confederates.

We went up Main street to Eighth street and then across to Cary street, and turned to the South, and went by burning buildings until we obtained a view of the bridges. The two bridges were on fire, and burning rapidly from the Manchester side. Everything in front of us was on fire; buildings blowing up and flames roaring in every direction.

We started back and observed on our left a fire in a building which was stored with ammunition. We galloped past the building and turned the corner toward Main street nearly when the building exploded. As we emerged from the smoke and cinders, Captain Ray remarked that we had only five seconds to spare and a close shave, even where we were when the building went up. We returned to the Capitol and reported to Major Stevens. I was sent with a detail to the Davis Mansion with instructions to leave a guard on the house. I found everything unmolested.

The desk used by the Confederate President was in disorder and everything indicated a hasty departure. I returned to my company, and we were kept busy in restoring order. Soon our troops began to pour into the city and order reigned. Energetic measures to stop the destruction of the city were promptly taken. The blue lines looked good to me, and the people soon realized that instead of destroyers they were saviors, for they saved the city not already burned by the folly of the retreating Confederates.

When we arrived in Richmond there was disorder, frenzy and chaos on every hand. Major Stevens restored order and confidence in a remarkably short time under conditions that were most trying. The troops as they arrived, were distributed where they could work effectively. Streets and residences were immediately guarded. The soldiers did not leave their commands to enrich themselves, and perfect order was restored before nightfall. Our little band of cavalry was everywhere, and making good for lack of numbers by energetic performance until the arrival of the infantry. And after they came we were in the saddle till late at night.

We encamped for the night in the yard of the Female Institute building, and we were a tired but happy band. The next day, April 4th, was quiet. The infernal condition of fire, smoke and explosion and continuous bursting of shells was changed to a scene of waste and ruin wrought in the fire district, which covered about one third of the city. The day was made eventful by the appearance of President Lincoln in the city. He came up from City Point and walked up the street alone with his boy. General Devens immediately received him. Mr. Lincoln met with a splendid ovation from the troops and the colored people as he rode about the city. He rode in a carriage accompanied by General Devens and other officers, escorted by a detail of cavalry from E and H squadrons of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry, commanded by Captain A. F. Ray.

On the morning of April 5th, the detachment that composed the detail that first entered Richmond on the morning of April 3, 1865, started to join its regiment, commanded by Colonel Washburn. They were with General Ord commanding the army of the James in pursuit of General Lee's retreating forces. We proceeded by way of Petersburg through Dinwiddie County and Amelia Courthouse to Burkeville Junction, arriving there April 7th. There we found that Colonel Washburn's command was engaged at High Bridge the day before, meeting with heavy loss, but emerging from the conflict with much honor and a splendid record of achievement.

The engagement is well described by our comrade, Captain Bouve of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry and will interest surviving comrades of the regiment, and all who love the defenders of their country. Colonel Washburn and many others of our regiment were in the field hospital at Burkeville Junction and Captain Ray and Lieutenant Miller visited them, and returning to our camp, gave us a graphic description of the charges of our

comrades the day before. Colonel Washburn survived his injuries only a few days. He told Captain Ray that "if I had the whole of the 4th regiment with me I would have annihilated Fitz Hugh Lee and Rosser." This was the marvelous courage and spirit of the man, "a gentleman and a soldier."

We immediately started on to report to the headquarters of the army of the Potomac. All the way from Petersburg there was evidence of conflict. At Amelia Courthouse we found the remnants of Ewell's corps of the Confederate army. Artillery, wagons and ammunition piled up in disorder; from people along the way reports of fighting. The Confederate troops hurriedly passed down the highway, to be immediately followed by the blue lines of federal troops. On the morning of the ninth of April we began to catch up with the army of the Potomac.

Through the lines of the sixth and ninth corps we rode, until early in the afternoon came the report that Lee had surrendered. You ought to have seen the faces of the soldiers of the army of the Potomac then. They looked like heroes to me. When we reached the Confederate lines we kept on through their camps and landed at General Meade's headquarters at Appomattox C. H., where we were immediately put on duty to assist in the work of paroling and disbanding the Confederate army.

A detail from my squadron went to Lynchburg one afternoon with General Gibbons returning in the night. When the arrangements of paroling the Confederate army were complete and General Lee was at liberty to depart from his army, an order came from army headquarters for a detail of cavalry to escort General Lee from his lines. The escort was made up from the 4th Massachusetts cavalry and I was privileged to be one of them. Sixteen men composed the platoon and Lieutenant Lovell of our regiment was in command. I was right guide of the detail, and I thought at the time that we were pretty good representatives of the Union cavalry.

We had H guidon with us which was one of the flags that was the first in Richmond. We went to General Lee's headquarters and Lieutenant Lovell reported to General Lee.

He was courteously received and asked to wait until General Lee and his staff had breakfast and completed arrangements for their departure. We dismounted a short distance away. General Lee seated himself at a table made from a hard tack box and ate

his last breakfast (consisting of hard tack, fried pork and coffee without milk), with the army of Northern Virginia. He was dressed in a neat, gray uniform and was a splendid looking soldier. Commanding officers of corps and divisions of the Confederate army and other officers then came to take leave of him. He was a short distance from me and his conversation was evidently words of encouragement and advice. Almost every one of the officers went away in tears. Then we mounted, and General Lee's party started through the lines of the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia for his home in Richmond.

Then commenced an ovation that seemed to me a wonderful manifestation of confidence and affection for this great military chieftain. From the time we left his camp till we passed the last of his regiments the men seemed to come from everywhere and the "Rebel Yell" was continuous. The little guidon of our squadron fluttered in the breeze and seemed silently to voice the sentiment of Webster, "Liberty and Union now and forever, one and inseparable."

The war was truly over and General Lee was departing for his home to devote the remainder of his life in peaceful pursuits. We continued with him a short distance in Buckingham County where the party halted. General Lee rode up to Lieutenant Lovell and thanked him for the escort, and saluted as he went his way, while we returned to Appomattox. At night the army of Northern Virginia was gone. The Union army was preparing to take up the line of march for their homes. The years of achievement and sacrifice have been commented on by eloquent orators. I have endeavored to pen a simple narrative to mention events as they appeared to me.

When the army started from Appomattox they were rejoiced to contemplate changed conditions. At night camp fires were burning. The dangerous duty of pickett and scouting and fighting was a thing of the past. Everybody felt elated and happy.

The news of President Lincoln's assassination came, and quiet and sadness reigned. It seemed a great pity that this should come to put a nation in mourning, at a time when rejoicing for the Nation redeemed, was universal. Our detachment returned to Richmond and we remained with our regiment, doing duty in restoring order in and around Petersburg and Richmond until late in the fall of 1865 when we were mustered out, the last Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment to return home.

Death of the War Horse

The Death of the Old War Horse which Col. Tilden of the Sixteenth Maine rode during the war, prompted the Rev. Nathaniel Butler to write the following lines. The sentiment expressed naturally appeals to anyone and especially to a soldier who rode a horse during the war to maintain the Union.

Farewell, my horse! thy work is done,
Thy splendid form lies low,
Thy limbs of steel have lost their strength,
Thy flashing eye its glow.
No more thy quivering nostrils sniff
The battle from afar,
No more beneath thy flying feet
The plains with thunder jar.
For thou wert born a hero soul,
In days when heroes fought,
When men, borne by thy glorious strength,
Immortal laurels sought.
Seated upon thy nerve-strung form,
Another life was mine,
And well I knew the same high thrill
Ran through my soul and thine.
A throne thou wert to sit upon,
And true as steel within,
Whene'er I felt thy brave heart beat,
My own has braver been.
And when the bugle's call to Charge
Over the column ran,
Thy arching crest, "with thunder clothed,"
Loved best to lead the van.

Upon the march, with tireless feet,
Through mountain, gorge and plain,
When others strayed thy place was kept,
Through all the long campaign.
But now, thy last, long halt is made :
Thy last campaign is o'er ;
The bugle call, the battle shout
Shall thrill thee never more.
Where art thou gone—old friend and true ?
What place hast thou to fill ?
For it may be thy spirit form
Somewhere is marching still.
Here there are those whom we call men,
Whose souls full well I know
Another life may not deserve
One-half so well as thou.
And natures such as thine has been
Another life may claim,
And God may have a place for them
Within his wide domain.
His armies tread their glorious march
Over the eternal plain,
Their leader rides a snow white steed,
Who follow in his train ?
We may not ever meet again :
But, wheresoe'er I go,
A cherished place within my heart
Thou'lt have, old friend, I know.
God made us both, and we have marched
Firm friends whilst thou wert here :
I only know I shall not blush
To meet thee anywhere.



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